

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cowper*.



IN THE PEACOCK CHAMBER.

## THE MAN IN POSSESSION.

CHAPTER XLII.—TRUE NOBILITY.

"No, no, my little friend, you are not *Pipistrellus*, you are undoubtedly good Gilbert White's *Vesperilio auritus*—your ears, like those of Midas, betray you."

So saying, Mr. Banaster, having long examined and tried in vain to feed and otherwise coax his bat into friendly relations, restored him to his present home.

Mullins, just as he had done so, announced Mr Keriol.

"The very man," said Mr. Banaster, as that gentleman entered the room.

"You naturally expected to see me after your strange letter of yesterday," said Mr. Keriol, who looked very ill at ease.

"I did," said Mr. Banaster; "and do you know what I was thinking an hour ago?"

"That you would be glad if you had made a mistake, perhaps?" said Keriol.

"Not in the least," said Mr. Banaster. "I don't like mistakes, either of my own making, or of others, they are disorderly things, and interfere with truth."

Mr. Keriol smiled, but it was a very feeble smile, like the struggle of sunshine through a November sky.

"I was thinking that you and I, having so placidly settled ourselves in stations exempt from the troublous cares and anxieties of life, are taken out of our nests, as I have expatriated my new bat, and turned about and made to show our paces, and tried in temper and patience by the cares and anxieties of others."

"By the interests of others," said Keriol, remembering how very little of care and anxiety affected Alan Stapylton.

"Put it as you will, but it's true, is it not?" said Mr. Banaster.

"Yes, very," sighed Mr. Keriol, dejectedly.

"And I see nothing for it but to give way, and work for others, since we have no pressing business of our own; in more serious version, let me put it—a duty is laid on me to which I must address myself, and the same is laid on you; we are brothers in burden (I dare not say trouble, for we ought not to fret at work); therefore, don't let us pull against each other, but go on like true yokefellows, helping, not hindering."

"I am thankful I have you for an opponent, for of course, if you stand by old Presgrave, you must be my opponent; but indeed, I must candidly tell you, I don't believe a word of this deed of gift," said Mr. Keriol.

"And I shouldn't, I'm afraid, if it were not that Gregory's signature is attached to it," said Mr. Banaster.

"He is wholly under his master's influence."

"His Master in heaven is to him above his master on earth," said Mr. Banaster. "I would take that old man's evidence, without a misgiving."

"But how easily a simple old fellow like that might be deceived," said Keriol.

"Not into a signature as witness," said Mr. Banaster.

"Then you are assured of the existence of the deed, and its validity?" asked Mr. Keriol.

"Not so, I have only Mr. Presgrave's word for it," said Mr. Banaster; "he did not offer to show it to me, and I did not ask it."

"Why has he kept it secret till now?" asked Keriol.

"Why won't my *Vespertilio auritus* let me feed him, and be friendly with me?" said Mr. Banaster. "He has his suspicions, his dark mysterious reasonings, under those great ears of his, which I cannot get at, any more than I can read the fears and fancies of Michael Presgrave."

"Then you counsel me to give up all effort on Alan's part?"

"Yes, if you ask me, you know that was my advice from the first."

"But you never advanced sufficient ground," said Keriol.

"Not for you—I am afraid it would have been more than enough for idle me," said Mr. Banaster.

"If this deed of gift—" said Keriol.

"Whether that exists or not, I do assure you your wisdom will be to give up the hope you cling to, as false. The old man hinted that if he were left unmolested, he would make a will in favour of Alan, unless some proved descendant of Jack Gayton

should arise, under which possible circumstances whenever occurring, the possessor, whoever he may be, would vacate and resign."

Keriol folded his arms, and looked resigned.

"It's vexatious to have to give up!" said Mr. Banaster.

"After all my trouble and expense," said Keriol.

"Worse to be defeated after a great deal more," suggested Mr. Banaster.

"And, I may own to you—poor Alan is so thoughtless, so thoroughly incapable of raising a fortune for himself, or doing without one," said Keriol.

"That's not a happy combination of qualifications, is it? But I think there is more in him than appears. I have been struck by him once or twice lately, as being less—well, I won't particularise—but much improved," said Mr. Banaster.

"I think Emmet Tafflet has done him good," said Keriol.

"She is a very nice, sensible little girl; and if they approve of each other (though I generally, as a theory, prefer the overplus of brains to be on the husband's side)—"

"Oh nothing of that kind, I wish it were," said Keriol. "They are gone back. Miss Tafflet, a good creature, but full of cranks, took something amiss—I know not what—on the day we went to Dasset, when you were there showing the place to that young man, and of course talking to old Presgrave about this deed of gift."

"That young man!" repeated Mr. Banaster, "doesn't he remind you of any one?"

"No, you asked me before—I never see likenesses," said Keriol, somewhat peevishly. "But the worst of it is, this foolish boy of mine has taken it into his head to fall in love—he will not say how, when, or where, nor with whom; but he has given me his word, that if he doesn't get Dasset, he will work at something, and that he will never marry without my full consent."

"I hope he won't," said Mr. Banaster, gravely.

"I am sure he won't; he is incapable of deceiving me, whatever his faults may be."

"Then, my friend, don't fret over this new feature in the case, which may be an important benefit. If he has formed an attachment to some worthy young woman, who is willing to wait for him, and for whom he is willing to work, it may be the turning-point in his life, and lead to great and excellent results," said Mr. Banaster.

"But he fancies I am rich, I am sure; though I have tried to convince him I am not. All that I received from my uncle's wife goes to her family. I shall have but a very bare competence to leave him," sighed Keriol.

"Well, don't fret over what may never come—the present is the thing for us to consider; and if you are wise, I think you will immediately stop all proceedings, and advise Alan that he has no hope of Dasset."

"My law expenses already—" said Keriol.

"Are nothing to what they will be if you persist," said Mr. Banaster.

It was long before that gentleman could produce the effect he desired upon his friend's mind, but he had the satisfaction of convincing him before he left, that although he had indisputable proof ready of Alan's right to Dasset, if his being the son of Richard Stapylton constituted that right, he had better, for the present at any rate, lay down his

arms. It was agreed before he left that he should accompany Mr. Banaster to Dasset, that they might together see the deed, and be thus satisfied of the fruitlessness of opposition.

"Brother Banaster!" said Miss Trigg, as he was returning through the hall, after having ushered Mr. Keriol to his carriage.

"Ma'am," said Mr. Banaster.

"I'm sorry you didn't invite Mr. Keriol to stay to luncheon," said Miss Trigg.

"Be happy, ma'am—I did so," said Mr. Banaster.

"I wish then he had accepted the invitation, I had a message to send to Miss Taffilet," said Miss Trigg.

"You can write to her, ma'am," said Mr. Banaster, who was always glad to see Miss Trigg busy composing a letter, as it gave a little breathing time to the whole house.

"No, I will call; I dislike going to Boulderstow, and I have no wish to seem intimate with Mr. Keriol after what has happened, but no doubt she expects it, and I must get over my dislike."

"I commend your spirit, sister Trigg, but in this instance you will have credit without any cost," said Mr. Banaster: "the ladies, probably, did not expect you; they have returned to Lee Point."

"Very provoking!" said Miss Trigg.

Mr. Banaster looked surprised.

"The truth is," said Miss Trigg, rather coyly, and affecting a superiority to such trifles as she spoke—"the truth is, Mr. Banaster, I have found out the Trigg crest!"

"Have you, ma'am—another moth?" asked Mr. Banaster.

"No, Mr. Banaster!" said Miss Trigg, "quite a different sort of thing. I found it on a ring of my poor sister Banaster's; one that must have come to her from our family, for she had it before she was married."

"Where did you find it, ma'am?" asked Mr. Banaster.

"I found it quite by accident in a little box that was hers, and which I had not opened for years and years—it is a seal ring, Mr. Banaster, and marked quite different from the bracelet."

"May I see it, ma'am?"

Miss Trigg produced the ring, large enough for the thumb, containing an oval stone, deeply cut.

He smiled as he looked at it, at once decyphering its heraldic meaning. "That, ma'am," he said, "belongs to Sir Richard Banastre, of Passingham, honourable and honoured ancestor of another branch of our illustrious house, of generations past. I gave the ring to my dear wife in the earliest days of our courtship, and, with your leave, will give you one of more modern appearance in lieu of it," said Mr. Banaster.

"It's no value to me if it's not my family," said Miss Trigg; "it's no matter, but I should have liked to show that proud woman that there are other people in the world besides the Taffilets."

"That, ma'am, she can scarcely avoid seeing, without your taking the trouble of showing it her," said Mr. Banaster. "But, Patience, let me in all friendliness give you a hint,—great minds are above caring for these things. Distinctions there should be, must be, will be to the end; God has so ordered it; and although troublesome and vain people will try to disturb his order for a time, they cannot do it; things will return to their true course; and remember

there is no glory in being born in this station, or in that,—the glory is in trying to adorn the station we are placed in, and being true to that."

"Ah, yes, but people do look down on those who haven't crests, and that sort of thing," said Miss Trigg, who was still sore with the thrust of Miss Taffilet's heraldic baton.

"People that so look down are to be pitied, Patience, for not looking up; depend on it, when the eyes are fixed on a crown of glory that cannot fade, the lustre of earthly distinctions will diminish to its true amount: we shall be content to ride high or walk obscurely, as it may please God."

"You should tell Miss Taffilet that," said Miss Trigg, a little spitefully.

"If she consulted me, ma'am, I would, but I have not that brotherly interest in her that I ought to have in you," he said.

"Thank you, Grantly, you always mean to be kind, I know, and there's no pride about you, I will say that for you," said Miss Trigg, reconciled, for the present, by his kind manner and words to the crushing of her hopes of foiling Miss Taffilet by presenting her with a Trigg crest.

Miss Taffilet was at that very moment meditating on crests and things connected with them. Mr. Banaster's remarks to Miss Trigg would have been very useful to her had she heard them, and with a teachable spirit. But Miss Taffilet was not teachable; she had grown stiff and set in her opinions and notions, and was incapable of bending. Her love of good lineage had in it, she was persuaded, no tincture of selfish pride; she would, she thought, have honoured the Taffilets as much if she had had the misfortune to be born outside the family; but then she was *not* born outside the family, therefore her thoughts were not to be depended on. Yet there was, doubtless, much of the true spirit of upholding rank for its own sake in her, and if she despised such as Miss Trigg, it was not for wanting crests, but for not knowing whether they had them. She was now busy in the peacock chamber, where a noble fire was burning on the broad old hearth; for Lee Point was an old-fashioned place, and in all its restorations Miss Taffilet had tried to preserve old appearances.

Mima was unfolding some tapestry which was perfect in substance, though faded in colour. Emmet stood by the square deep-seated window, looking out on the snow that fell on the yews, that, with their fantastically-cut foliage, formed the avenue.

"Emmet," said Miss Taffilet.

Emmet turned to reply.

"You can go now, Mima," said Miss Taffilet; "you are wanted, no doubt, below."

Mima grumbled that she was not wanted below, and that there were more pieces to be looked to that belonged to those hangings.

"If you want Mima," said Emmet, "I will go down and give any orders, and she may stay here."

"I want *you*," said Miss Taffilet, sharply, "and I don't want Mima."

Mima, with a very dissatisfied air, left the room.

"That woman is spoilt by mixing with those servants," said Miss Taffilet.

"I think she is exactly what she was before we went there, aunty," said Emmet.

"No, she is not, Emmet, there is a want of reverence about her; I can feel it, you can't; you have no perception."



Emmet, being indifferent to this charge, was content to let Mima's character alone, and said nothing.

"I wish you had, Emmet," said Miss Taffilet.

"Had what, aunty?" said Emmet.

"Perception—understanding—feeling," said Miss Taffilet.

"Oh, aunty, I hope I have a little of each," said Emmet, laughing.

"Don't laugh, Emmet; I must tell you I have very serious thoughts about you," said Miss Taffilet.

Emmet knew what was coming, and counted a staid silence the best way of meeting the storm.

"Yes," repeated Miss Taffilet, "very serious thoughts indeed, Emmet."

Emmet could only look, not at her aunt, her eyes looked so terribly bright and black, but at the tapestry as it lay displayed on various supports.

"Ah, Emmet, it's of no use for you to look at those marks of the esteem your family was held in in days gone by, that work of noble matrons, who would have died rather than disgrace their name," said Miss Taffilet.

Emmet coloured a little as she answered, "Aunty, I don't want to look at them; I'm sure I have as much objection to disgrace my name as those matrons or any other matrons ever had."

The spirit with which she spoke softened Miss Taffilet; she sighed as she said, "I wish I could think so."

"I'm sorry, Aunt Abigail, if you don't think so, and am only glad I have never given you any cause to doubt me in that or any way."

"Emmet," said Miss Taffilet, still more calmly, "I believe you mean well; but, my dear, you are so thoughtless, you have no dignity, no self-esteem about you, you allow liberties, and I'm sure you encourage hopes that would, if they were fulfilled, *kill me*—yes, Emmet, *kill me*—and nothing less."

"I know of no hopes that are likely to do that," said Emmet, coldly, and not at all affected by her aunt's tragic announcement.

"You do, Emmet, you know very well that you are feeding hopes of a kind that, as I say, would kill me."

"I cannot guess riddles, unless they are Alan Stapylton's," said Emmet, with a smile that was not, however, a happy one.

"Don't mention him—don't mention him—you might—oh, Emmet, you might have done anything with that young man," said Miss Taffilet.

"I had no wish to do anything with him," said Emmet, coldly.

"No—that was it—I am sure, if you had given him the least encouragement, the thing would have been done, and I should have had the happiness of seeing you settled according to your rank and station."

"Thank you, aunty, but I am not prepared to sacrifice everything to rank and station," said Emmet.

"You! you don't know the meaning of the words!" said Miss Taffilet, angrily.

"I think I do, aunty, and I hope I value them aright," said Emmet, with spirit.

"You don't, or you would never have—I can hardly bring myself to speak of it, but I *must* do it—you would never have allowed that young man, that—"

"You need not call him any names, aunty," said Emmet, colouring; "you mean John Trafford."

"I do," said Miss Taffilet, not a little put down by her niece's voice and eye.

"And pray, what have you to say against John Trafford, aunt, whom I have known all my life, played with like a brother, been used to as a friend, the brother of my friend, and *my* friend—yes, and I am proud to call him so, even if I did not owe my life and yours to his noble heroism!"

Emmet's heart beat high as she spoke, and for a minute so did Miss Taffilet's too; she was unable to reply, but recovering herself, she said,—

"It was unfortunate that you were ever allowed to be intimate there; I blame myself for it, and I would alter it all now if I could, but it's past, and I can't help it! *I can't help it!*"

As she spoke her voice sounded as if tears were not far off, and she looked so troubled that Emmet, though not just then inclined towards her, could not help being sorry for her.

"Aunty," she said, with effort, "if you fancy that anything beyond friendship has ever passed between me and John Trafford, you are mistaken; he is too high with *true* nobility of mind to condescend to offer himself where his want of birth might expose him to refusal, and I hope I have at least too much sense and feeling, though no Taffilet, by many degrees, I confess, to wish him to do it."

"My dear, I am sorry if I have misjudged you," said Miss Taffilet, pacified, a little tamed, and touched with respect for her niece's spirit.

"I have no doubt the young man is a very respectable young man in his station, and anything I could do to show how sensible I am of his brave act, for it *was* a brave act, I admit" (Emmet's lips gave a scornful turn), "I would do, I should like to do; indeed, I have asked Mr. Keriol to think of something for him."

Emmet had expended all her fortitude in what she had had to say, and now, all her colour fading, as she thought of the blank in her own heart, by reason of the assurance that had filled her aunt's with such lively satisfaction, her eyes filled with unwilling tears, which she dried unobserved, as she leant once more against the window and looked out on the snow falling on the yew-trees, *though without seeing it!*

#### CHAPTER XLII.—MR. KERIOL HAS STRANGE GUESTS.

"I *REALLY* am greatly perplexed, Alan," said Mr. Keriol, a few days after his visit to Mr. Banaster; "I cannot see my way at all through this business, which I hoped was going on so prosperously."

Alan was engaged in constructing a cork model, and looking up, smiled a reply, which meant, "As I don't pretend to see further than you, I cannot offer to help."

"Until I have seen this deed of gift, which Mr. Presgrave, under plea of illness, does not produce, and will not appoint any day for showing, I cannot make up my mind to retract. I believe it is a fiction of the old man's to frighten me out of the expense of the trial. Alan, I wish you would give up that thing and listen to me with attention," he added, a little peevishly, as Alan continued to work away silently, apparently more interested in the castle he was constructing than in the estate of Barons Dassetts.

"My good papa Keriol," he cried, looking up with a little surprise, "what can I say or do? If you will tell me, I will be as active as the best eel in the Dassetts pond."

"But, my dear boy, you cannot attend to two things at once; put down your knife and listen to me."

Alan looked very sorry to put down his knife, but he was not accustomed to thwarting the wishes of others, more especially those of his best friend, and rising from the table, leant against the window, looking towards his guardian with a serious air, and turning his back to his model. Mr. Keriol began to tell him what he had often told him before, the distinct claim he had to the estate, and how sure he felt that it would be his if no fraud were practised against him—fraud so cleverly contrived as to elude the detection of the law. He was proceeding with great animation, and Alan was listening with as much patience as if he had never heard a word of it before, when his gaze was fixed, with much curiosity in it, on the street.

"What are you looking at?" asked Mr. Keriol, vexed at this diversion of his thoughts; "anything is enough, Alan, to turn your mind from business."

"There is the oddest-looking old woman staring up at the house," said Alan; "do come and look at her. If one believed in witches, one would put her down for a first-rate specimen."

Mr. Keriol got up and advanced to the window, more to satisfy Alan and bring him back to good behaviour than to look at the witch.

"I believe—yes, it is that old Rowans," he said, when he had looked out and beheld her.

"What, Mrs. Rowans, that is to give evidence on my behalf?" said Alan.

"The same," said Keriol. "What can she want here now? I have got all I want from her."

"But she hasn't got all she wants from you, very likely. Shall I give directions to have her brought in? From her stare at the house she seems doubtful as to the way in," said Alan, glad at the escape from the lawsuit tale, which, as Barons Dasset seemed to be retreating into the clouds, he thought it rather an unnecessary bore to listen to. A servant was despatched to usher the old woman into the hall, where Alan was about to receive her, when his guardian prevented him, saying he should like a little private conversation with her.

"Then I may leave you for a short time; I am due at Tailor Wilford's, so it just fits in." And in a few minutes Alan was walking towards the old gentleman's house, feeling a livelier gratitude to Mrs. Rowans than he could have conceived possible on so short an acquaintance, and with such unfavourable impressions.

"What has brought you here?" asked Mr. Keriol, when he had closed the door and desired the scared-looking old woman to be seated.

"I'm come by the coach," she replied, looking round furtively, as if to accustom herself to a "sitting" in such luxurious quarters.

"What have you come for?" asked Mr. Keriol.

"For? ye see, ye see," she said, with hesitation, "I've been in sad misfortunes and trouble sin' you were at Laxley."

"Misfortunes?" said Mr. Keriol.

"Ay, an' I doubt they've all come through what I've broke to you!" said Meg, with a look which unmistakably meant, "and I must have damages to the full amount."

"Explain yourself," said Mr. Keriol.

"It's a long explanation I'll have to make on't," said Meg, "but I'll begin wi' telling you that my pay is stopped."

"Pay! what pay?" asked Mr. Keriol.

"Pay as I've got on account of Tarvit for these many years," said Meg.

"Where from?" asked Mr. Keriol, getting more and more puzzled.

"From Great Laxley, where I went every quarter, where I was gone on the day you come to me, a bad unlucky day it was to me, I reckon."

"Why, what had that day, or what had I to do with your loss?" asked Mr. Keriol.

"It was *all* as had to do wi' it, I'm sure and sartan," said Meg, giving her umbrella an impressive clasp and squeeze which sent a stream between the rich piles of the carpet.

"You must really speak out and explain yourself, for I am sure I paid you very bountifully for such information as you gave me; and I promised you, if it proved as useful to me as I hoped it would, to reward you handsomely again, and I'll keep my word; I don't know what you would have."

"I never knowed as you was going to spread it about what I telled ye," said Meg, shaking her head expressively; "if I'd a knowed that, I wouldn't a let a word go for twice what you gave me and promised me."

"Why, what has what you told me to do with the money you received at Laxley?"

"I can't tell that, no more than the money is stopped on the 'count, as I telled ye," said Meg.

"Who has stopped it? Who paid it you?"

"It were a gentleman wi' white hair and gold spectacles," said Meg.

"What's his name? Where does he live?" said Mr. Keriol.

"His name's not put on the door, only 'Bank' is put on the door; he lives there at the bank at Great Laxley," said Meg, who didn't rightly understand the mysterious communication by means of which the nameless bestower of her wealth at Laxley became the channel of another's gift.

"But who has paid the money into the bank for you?" asked Mr. Keriol.

"I don't know, not I; but the gentleman as I always goes to telled me I needn't to come no more, for there'd be nought for me."

"But your son may have stopped it."

"He baint no son o' mine," said Meg, with indifference.

"Your son-in-law—at any rate, you have received the money, you say, for him; and he has perhaps now need of it for himself."

"I know nought of him," said Meg. "But I want my 'lowance made good someways, it were all I had to look to; an' I got the child, little Rosy, to keep wi' it; an' he promised to take her wi' him to 'Merica, but nobody does me no good, and it's all a-goin' out, and nought a-comin' in now."

Mr. Keriol sat for a moment deep in thought, while Meg took advantage of the pause to look round at the pictures that hung in massive frames from the walls, and the various other ornaments that adorned the room. Except the bank, where she had looked with worship in her heart, at the piles of gold—silver—piles on piles, till she felt as if to stand behind that counter, and touch, and count, and otherwise be familiar with its treasure, would be the next state of happiness to possessing it—except the bank, she had never seen so costly a place. Were those frames made of gold?—those ornaments, were they gold? Were they silver?

"And where is the man now?" cried Mr. Keriol, suddenly startling her from her reverie.

"Him wi' the white hair and gold spectacles?" she asked.

"No, no, your son-in-law—this Tarvit," said Mr. Keriol.

"That's past me to tell," said Meg, looking down, and beholding for the first time the inundation caused by her umbrella.

"How did you find out where I lived?" asked Mr. Keriol.

She paused a moment, evidently to consider what to say, and raising her face, with its full quantum of cunning on it, replied, "I told him what like you was when I seed him last, and he says, says he, it's Mr. Keriol, him as me wife brought the child to."

"You knew that before—I told you myself," said Mr. Keriol, impatiently.

"Ay, you did, an' I axed him where you lived, an' he telled me, an' that's the way I'm come."

"Well, and pray what have you come for?" said Mr. Keriol, who had no mind to invest more funds just yet, in what he feared was a sinking cause.

"I come to ax you to make m' 'llowance good, bein' as I lost it through what I telled you," said Meg.

"Absurd!" said Mr. Keriol; "if you have lost it, it is on account of your son's having taken it for himself, you may depend on it."

Meg could not see it in that light, and came out with affecting descriptions of her destitution, now that this payment was gone, and lamented her expenses in coming on the top of the coach that very morning, and hoped her last shilling was not to be thrown away on a failing experiment. Mr. Keriol was no match for her, he could neither convince nor satisfy her; in short, she had come for money, and without money she would not depart, if she could any way help it.

While this discussion was going on, Alan was on his way to the tailor's shop, to which he did not take the direct road, it must be admitted, but went at right angles from it down the street in which the old gentleman lived, taking a careless look at the window as he passed. It was entirely an accident, but it so happened that Mary was at the window at the time, looking out by the old gentleman's request to see if it had ceased to rain. She returned Alan's bow and smile as he passed, and thought she had seldom seen so thoroughly kind a face. "He is not like John," she thought, "but then, I don't think any one is like John!"

"Well, Mary," said the old gentleman, "how about the weather? Has the rain stopped?"

"Oh, I forgot," she replied, looking out again, "yes, it does not rain at all now—but—"

"But what?" asked the old gentleman.

"There is such a crowd at the end of the street," she said, looking as well as she could in the direction of it, to which Alan's steps had also been attracted.

"A crowd, I am very sorry; I don't like crowds, and we scarcely ever have one in this street. They are very unhealthy things, you don't know what diseases may be in the middle of them. I hope it's not coming up here, Mary."

"It is," said Mary.

"Is it one of those miserable organs that always give me palpitations? My dear, get out your pence tub from the chiffonier, and have a penny ready to give them, and send them away," said the old gentleman.

"It's not an organ," said Mary, "it's a policeman with some man in custody; it is, indeed, and he is coming up this street."

"How exceedingly unpleasant," said the old gentleman; "not a large crowd, Mary?"

"Pretty well," said Mary, who was attracted by seeing Alan walking by the side of the policeman, as if connected with the affair.

And so he was, for he had met the cavalcade just as he was turning down to Wilford's shop, when the policeman said, "There's Mr. Stapylton," when he found that they were going to his guardian, who was a magistrate, for a warrant of committal. As he thought he might save him some little trouble by returning he did so, and in a few moments the party were in the servants' hall.

Meg followed Mr. Keriol out when he went to see the prisoner, and when she entered the hall and faced him, screamed out, "Ned Tarvit! be it *you*! and in handcuffs? Oh, the day!"

### THE LATE M. DE LAMARTINE.

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE, poet and orator, and for a short time the foremost man in France, was born in 1791, at Maçon, the little town on the Saône, where he was recently buried. There he was cradled while the storms of the First Revolution swept over the country. His father took part in the defence of the king, was wounded before the Tuilleries, and narrowly escaped with his life into retirement. While Alphonse was yet a babe, the mob seized by night his grandfather and grandmother, and other members of the family, and bore them off to the prison set apart for the suspected of the province. His father was placed in a convent at Maçon, and the earliest picture which the poet has drawn of his life represents his mother as discovering her husband's cell, holding up her child to his gaze, and, with a woman's devotion, devising secret means of communication. In such circumstances of romance was his infancy nurtured; and it seemed as if the melancholy attaching to those days left its shadow upon his maturer years.

Of his mother, Lamartine always wrote with enthusiasm. It was to her simple and pious teaching that he acknowledged the greatest obligations. His boyhood was spent at Milly, where, in the seclusion of a wild and rugged country, he enjoyed the utmost freedom, and, dressed in peasant garb, shared the pursuits of the village shepherds. Yet he learned to read with avidity, and soon could not find books to satisfy his thirst for knowledge. Tasso was the first poet with whom he became acquainted, and the "Jerusalem Delivered" long remained a favourite of his youth. Ossian also early excited his admiration. After brief unsatisfactory trial of other schools, he was sent to complete his education at the college of Bellay, then under the direction of the Jesuits. Having terminated his course with honour, he went to travel in Italy, towards the last years of the Empire. At Rome he passed a winter alone in the house of a poor painter, rejoicing in his isolation; reading, as inclination dictated, the historians and poets of other days, and moralising on the decline and fall of states. Dreams of another great Roman republic were then stirring in the minds of many young Italians, and he seems to have caught their spirit. From that period he dated his intense sympathy with



liberty, and his "hatred" for the hero of the century—a contempt for the proud name of Napoleon which he never lost. From Rome he wandered to Naples, where he met with a college friend ready to join him in any enterprise. The sunny bay was so enchanting that they resolved to turn fishermen; and for two months they surrendered themselves to the attractions of the sea. One night—so the story runs—they were overtaken by a storm, and their boat dashed to pieces on the rocks of Procida. The old fisherman to whom they had engaged themselves as rowers had a rude cottage on the island, where his wife and grand-daughter resided during the summer months, for the purpose of rearing figs and grapes to be sold in the neighbouring markets. There they found shelter; and it was not long before they won the grateful regard of its inmates by purchasing a new boat for the old man. For several days they were detained by the violence of the tempest, and when the wind fell, the whole family returned together to Naples. As was natural from their constant association, a tender attachment gradually grew up between Graziella, the grand-daughter, and the youthful Lamartine. When, after the lapse of some months, he was summoned back to France, he promised her to return; but the shock of separation was more than she could bear, and when winter came, he received news of her death. Lamartine has told the story with pathetic art, and it forms too conspicuous an episode in his life to be omitted here. From such scenes and experiences his genius drew form and spirit.

On the restoration of the Bourbons, in 1814, Lamartine was enrolled as one of the royal body-guard; but his military career was of short duration. It is not necessary that we follow him further through the changes of those earlier years, though they strangely blended poetry and romance, if we may trust the "Memoirs of my Youth," and other pages in which he has portrayed them. The temptation to scene-painting is strong in such a writer, nor can it be doubted that he colours the past too vividly.

It was in 1820 that Lamartine first became known as a poet, by his "*Méditations Poétiques*." It was two years before he could obtain a publisher; and then they appeared in a small and modest volume without preface or name; but their success was sudden and great. They struck a plaintive chord, in harmony with the national feeling after the exhausting wars and final overthrow of Napoleon; they spoke in the language of natural passion, and marked also a reaction against the classical tyrannies which had weakened French literature. Lamartine himself regarded them as a protest against the mathematical rule and cold materialism of the Empire. It was scarcely possible that he should write in a frigid, artificial style. Every circumstance that could influence the development of his genius was such as to force it to a full, impassioned utterance. He had lived in free and constant intercourse with nature; he had travelled much, and felt the power of great historic associations; he had tasted love and grief—the brimming cup of human experience. His poems, as a consequence, throbbed with an intenser life. The themes which he has touched in this first volume relate chiefly to the destiny of man, the limitations which beset him, his aspirations, and the varying discipline by which he is trained for immortality. A pensive, melancholy strain runs through the "*Méditations*;" they question much; but are per-

vaded by a devout religious feeling; and sometimes rise to lofty flights of praise. Of the poem on "Man," addressed to Lord Byron, Chateaubriand said it was worth all his "Genius of Christianity." It is an expostulation with the English poet on his unbelief, but its doctrine is rather one of submission than of faith; it extols the divine wisdom, yet fails "to justify the ways of God to man;" and for this reason, that there is no solution for the darker mysteries it contemplates but in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Three years later appeared the "*Nouvelles Méditations*," well sustaining his fame, characterised by the same spirit, but less profoundly melancholy. These were quickly followed by two longer poems, the "Death of Socrates," and a concluding canto to Lord Byron's "Childe Harold;" but neither greatly impressed the public. In 1829 the poet published the "*Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses*," in which, perhaps, his genius has taken its boldest flights—though sometimes into transcendental regions. Notwithstanding some severe criticisms, they added much to his reputation. The same year he was elected a member of the French Academy. In 1836, he essayed a new field, and brought out "*Jocelyn*," a poetical romance, which soon became popular, and which he designed as an episode of a grander poem, a sort of epic, never completed. Other volumes followed, but of inferior power. In the preface to the "*Recueillemens Poétiques*," issued in 1839, Lamartine speaks lightly of poetry, as but the pastime of his idle hours. "The public think that I have passed thirty years in making rhymes, and in watching the stars; I have not spent thirty months. What would you think of a man who was singing from morning to night?" The fact was, other interests had now absorbed him. Excepting a drama, "*Toussaint l'Ouverture*," and a few minor productions, his muse was from this time silent.

The road to political eminence had but slowly opened before him. His first literary success, however, had attracted the attention of the Government, who rewarded him by appointing him secretary to the embassy at Naples. There he met the young English lady who became his wife. Subsequently he was sent to London in the same capacity; and thence he was transferred to Florence as *chargé d'affaires*.

When the revolution of 1830 placed Louis Philippe on the throne, Lamartine had been nominated minister plenipotentiary at Athens. He at once resigned, refusing the solicitations of the new Government to retain the appointment, or serve elsewhere. The elections approaching, he offered himself as a candidate for the Chamber of Deputies, both at Toulon and Dunkirk, but was rejected. His retirement into private life enabled him to execute a long-cherished project. In princely fashion, too characteristic of his tastes, he fitted out a vessel at Marseilles, and with his wife and daughter and a few friends, embarked on a poetical pilgrimage to the East. The "*Voyage en Orient*" was published on his return, and describes with enthusiasm the scenes which he witnessed. His first visit, after landing at Beyrout, was to Lady Hester Stanhope, whom the Arabs, captivated by her beauty, had proclaimed Queen of Palmyra. This extraordinary woman was the niece of Pitt, who, after the death of her uncle, had travelled through Europe, and finally settled upon one of the mountains of Lebanon. Her fame

had spread far through the deserts; and the vigour and mysticism which blended in her character, caused her to be regarded almost with veneration. She lived the life of a hermit, and devoted much of her time to the study of astrology. "We are all children," she said to Lamartine, "of some one of those celestial fires which preside at our birth. I see evidently that you are born under the influence of very happy, potent, and benevolent stars." Then, in the course of a strange, erratic conversation, she added, "You will soon return to Europe; Europe is exhausted; France alone has a great mission to accomplish; you will participate in it. I do not yet know the names of all your stars. One of them is certainly Mercury, which gives clearness and emphasis to the intellect and to the power of expression; you ought to be a poet, that is evident from your eyes and the higher part of your face; lower, you are under the empire of quite distinct and almost opposing stars, in which there is an influence of energy and action. There is the sun also in the leaning of your head, and in the manner in which you throw it on your left shoulder. You may be thankful; there are few men who are born under more than one star, few whose star is happy, still fewer whose star, when favourable, is not counterbalanced by the malignant influence of an opposing star."

Such were the predictions which greeted the poet on his arrival in the East. We shall not attempt to follow him on a journey every stage of which appealed to his imagination and quickened the most sacred recollections. On returning from Jerusalem, he had the misfortune to lose his daughter, who was taken from him by death at Beyrout. Her remains were embalmed and sent home to Marseilles in the same vessel which had brought her out in the bloom of happy youth. With sorrowing heart the poet resumed his travels, returning home by Constantinople and the Balkan.

Meantime, during his absence, Lamartine had been chosen a deputy for the department of the Nord. In January, 1834, he first appeared in the tribune; but his speech was a failure: it treated of great moral themes with elaborate art, but passed by the question before the Chamber. It soon became evident that Lamartine was of no section. He had entered the ranks under M. Guizot; but as the Conservative party inclined to reaction, so did he advance in Liberalism. His policy was undefined, and his consistency impeached on all hands. In truth, he was more a poet than a statesman; however dubious his political position, his voice was always on the side of humanity and freedom. As was said, he was "the representative of the public heart." He appears to have made great efforts to discipline himself in speaking. His speeches were at first vague and cloudy, but in time he learned to shape his orations as successfully as his poems. The Eastern question, the abolition of capital punishment, the defence of purely literary studies, which Arago professed to think lightly of, and certain social questions, furnished him with subjects on which he spoke with a fluency that delighted his hearers. His ornate and picturesque style better accorded with such topics; the critics praised, and said of him that he spoke "the language of Lamartine; for no one else spoke it, or could speak it." It has been said that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world;" and although it did not

seem so in this case, when often deputies went away and quickly forgot the brilliant periods which had charmed them, yet there was a force and passion in this eloquence and the heart from which it came, which was one day to influence the destinies of France. As if to show how unfounded was the reproach brought against him of not being a practical politician, Lamartine introduced a plan to substitute for the Ottoman Empire, the fall of which he believed to be imminent, a vast European colonisation; and he demanded that a general congress of all the Powers of Europe should be assembled to determine its conditions. It was a magnificent dream. His biographers record that, descending to more prosaic ground, he for once convinced his critics by selecting a subject relating to sugar, and delivering a speech in which he proved that he could on occasion master the minutest details.

Lamartine describes his position during these earlier years, as more consistent and unselfish than his opponents would allow, in the following passage, from his "History of the Revolution of 1848":—"For twelve years Lamartine had kept himself isolated from all parties, seeking the path of truth, and the light of philosophy; speaking sometimes for, sometimes against, the acts of Government. His political principles were those of that eternal truth of which the gospel is but one page—the equality of men before God to be realised on earth by laws and forms of government, giving to the largest number, and in time to all citizens, the right of personal intervention in government, and thereby the means of promoting the moral and material welfare of society. Lamartine, however, recognised the rule and government of reason as superior to the brutal sovereignty of numbers. He never pushed his aspirations for equality to the chimera of a violent attempt to produce that which cannot by possibility exist—the actual social equalisation of all classes and conditions. He held no society as civilised, unless it was founded on three bases, which seem laid down by instinct itself—the State, the family compact, and property."

Directing his attention to historical themes, Lamartine produced, in 1847, an immense sensation by the publication of his "Histoire des Girondins," which largely helped to prepare the way for the revolution of the subsequent year. As history, the book is full of inaccuracies; but its vivid representations threw a poetical halo round the actors in the sanguinary scenes it described, and excited the keenest interest. It was reprinted in cheap editions, and made his name still more popular throughout France.

When the revolution of February soon afterwards broke out, Lamartine took naturally the position of a leader. At the critical moment when the Duchess of Orleans presented herself and her children to the Chamber of Deputies, he was one of the first to demand the establishment of a Provisional Government; and his name was at once enrolled on the list of members, and accepted by the sovereign people. M. Thiers had hastily entered, his face pale, his coat in rags, exclaiming, "The tide is coming in! the tide is coming in!" and while deputies stole out in terror, the mob forced its way into the galleries, which soon bristled with bayonets, while the tricolour was waved from the tribune. It was in the fierce excitement of that scene that Lamartine first asserted his ascendancy.

The chosen men marched, at the head of a huge column of citizens, to the Hotel de Ville, as the



traditional council-chamber of the Revolution. An immense multitude thronged every approach; the courts were encumbered with riderless horses, and with wounded men lying on rude heaps of straw; ragged soldiers fraternised with enthusiastic work-

men were thrust back from the door, and violent men intruded. Decrees were issued in that protracted sitting which laconically illustrated the urgency of every minute. To abolish the Chamber of Peers, these words were traced in haste, "*Il est interdit à la*



REJECTION OF THE RED FLAG.

men, and cries for a Republic mingled with the "Marseillaise" in a strange babel of sound. The members of the Government forced their way to a remote room. It was Lamartine who first drew up the proclamation in favour of a Republic; and, with some verbal changes to make it stronger, presently the document was copied on some hundred sheets of paper, and showered down from the windows of the Hotel upon the people. It was a night of prodigious toil and tumult. The gravest questions had to be debated, with the mob surging round; often the sen-

*Chambre des Pairs de se réunir,"* and that was all.\* From the beginning Lamartine appears to have taken the ground that the nation by its vote must ultimately determine the form of government—a principle which brought him into conflict with those ardent spirits who desired to reconstruct society at once. Again and again was he called away to door, stair, window, or square, to address and calm the angry crowd by his eloquence. His personal heroism and his

\* "Historical Revelations." By Louis Blanc.

persuasive words had almost magical effect. "Hang all traitors on the lamp-post!" shouted the mob. "Lamartine's head! Lamartine's head!" "My head, fellow-citizens!" said he, with a sarcastic smile; "would indeed that you all had it this moment on your shoulders, you would be calmer and wiser men, and the work of your revolution would go on far better." And the words turned imprecations into laughter. "You are no true patriot!" exclaimed an infuriated republican, producing a pistol, "what hinders me from taking your life now?" "Your own conscience," calmly replied the minister, "and the utter uselessness of such an outrage." The man dropped his weapon, turned pale, and muttered, "You are not a true republican, nor yet a true patriot; but I believe you are an honest man."

The people, immediately after the proclamation of the Republic, demanded the adoption of the ill-omened Red Flag; and no incident of Lamartine's life has been more applauded than his conduct on this occasion. Strips of scarlet had been torn into pieces and distributed along the quays and streets. Red flags waved from the windows, red rosettes were worn, and the fiery emblem was raised also on the bayonet. A piece of red stuff, torn from a lounge or a hanging, and thrown from an upper storey, was seized and made into a banner. The crowd was clamorous. "Citizens," he said, as he closed his oration, "I will reject even to death this banner of blood—and you should repudiate it still more than myself; for this Red Flag you offer us has only made the circuit of the Champs de Mars bathed in the blood of the people; while the tricoloured banner has made the circuit of the world, with the name, the glory, and the liberty of your country." On the morrow the socialist workmen came in a body, and called on the Government to sign a proclamation promising the organisation of labour. "Citizens," said the same courageous and invincible orator, "were you to place me in front of twenty cannons, you would not induce me to sign these two words, *organisation of labour*, and I will tell you wherefore."

Few orators have exerted a more direct power than Lamartine in those tumultuous days; but, great as was his influence, and courageously as he exerted it on the side of order, he has sometimes been invested with a false romance. In this matter of the Red Flag, his historical allusion was inaccurate. It is the fact, moreover, that while the popular agitation was extending, Louis Blanc, as one of the members of the Provisional Government, had himself proposed the adoption of the Red Flag, on the ground that the tricolour was "the result and symbol of a compromise between the king and the people,"\* and that

the Red Flag denoted the completeness of the change inaugurated, by which not only royalty, but its very tokens were set aside. His proposal had been overruled in council, and the tricolour chosen, with the compromise that a red rosette should be worn by the members of the Government, and also attached to the flag. It devolved on Lamartine to make the people acquainted with this decision; the crowd was threatening, and he won them to acquiescence with consummate skill. The Red Flag had been raised over the barricades; it was, therefore, the symbol of strife, and of subversive ideas, but not, as has been represented, of anarchy, bloodshed, and terrorism.

M. Emile Ollivier vouches for an anecdote which amusingly illustrates the estimation in which the populace held the great orator at this time:—"At the Hotel de Ville, Lamartine received the announcement that a deputation of Vesuviennes demanded an interview. These women strongly resembled the famous *poissardes* of the First Revolution. The doors of his cabinet were thrown open, and the apartment was presently filled by these fierce-looking dames, whose dishevelled locks and uncouth garb presented anything but an attractive spectacle. M. de Lamartine bowed, and begged to know whether he could be of any service to his visitors. 'Citizen,' replied the foremost amongst them, standing with arms akimbo in front of her comrades, 'the Vesuviennes have resolved to send you a deputation to express their admiration of your conduct. There are fifty of us, and, in the name of all the Vesuviennes, we, fifty in number, have come to kiss you.' The poet gave one glance at the forest of unkempt hair and the rubicund cheeks of the fifty unwashed Venuses, and thus replied:—'Citoyennes, I thank you for the sentiments you inspire me with; but allow me to remark that patriots of your stamp are more than women—they are men. Men do not embrace each other. We shake hands.' And thus by a stroke of the most subtle flattery did the author of the 'Méditations' escape the fifty kisses of the Megæras of the Revolution of '48." Lamartine himself relates how he parried the advances of an enthusiastic Amazon, who came sword in hand to offer her services, with the words, "Women do not fight. They are on the side of all the wounded."

During those turbulent months, the young republic was more than once indebted to the eloquence of Lamartine almost for its existence. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, he discharged his duties with unshaken resolution, though sometimes there was a dangerous propagandist sound in his words. "We do not, like barbarians," he said, "arm the new idea with iron or with fire. We arm it only with its own gentle light. . . . Yet republican France is not only the country, she is also the soldier of the democratic principle of the future." He opposed the socialist leaders when they urged the postponement of the elections, which would weaken the influence of the capital, and hand over the Revolution, so they contended, to the less enlightened provinces. Still he maintained a chief position, and on one occasion, when a disturbance was suppressed, it is said that two hundred thousand bayonets defiled beneath his window to the cry of "Vive Lamartine!" His popularity knew no bounds. Ten departments elected him as member of the National Assembly; and while the constitution was still unformed, there

\* It is interesting to note the precise grounds on which the socialist historian justifies the popular preference for the Red Flag:—"What was the national colour in the remotest and most obscure ages of French history is a point of no great importance. But if we refer to a more recent period, we find that the red flag, called *oriflamme*, was, from the reign of Henry I to the time of Charles VII, the national standard; whilst the white banner, marked with fleurs-de-lys, was what Froissart terms '*dannière souveraine du roy*.' The white flag began to be substituted for the red one under the reign of Charles VII, that is at the very period when the baneful system of standing armies was established in France for the sake of propping despotism. In 1789, the middle classes having raised themselves over the ruins of the feudal régime to the highest pitch of political power, Lafayette, on the 13th of July, moved, at the Hotel de Ville, the adoption of a new flag to be formed by the association of white, which was considered the colour of royalty, with red and blue, which were the colours of the *Tiers Etat Parisien*. The tricoloured flag was therefore the result and the symbol of a compromise between the king and the people. Kings having been done away with, there was no reason why their past power should be continued to be symbolised." Other reasons for the popular choice may be found in the "Historical Revelations" of Louis Blanc.

is little doubt that he might have assumed the dictatorship.

This popularity, however, was of brief duration. Divisions multiplied as theory had to give place to the practical needs of government. No powers of eloquence could solve the knotty social problems which now arose. To the views of the socialist party, which grew in compact strength, and was governed by a keen intelligence, Lamartine would not bend; on the other hand, there were those who suspected him of complicity with the most extreme men, and of even fomenting disturbances that he might increase his influence; nor was his ingenious plea accepted—that if he conspired, it was as the conductor conspires with the thunder. He was elected only fourth on the list of the Executive Commission which succeeded the Provisional Government. The confidence then waning he never recovered. When, on the abolition of the *ateliers nationaux*, the terrible insurrection of June devastated the streets of Paris, he fought almost in desperation. "Lamartine felt," he has written of himself, "as though he could have wished for death to release him from the odious responsibility of bloodshed which pressed upon him so unjustly but yet so unavoidably. Thrice he dismounted from his horse, and stationed himself at the foot of the barricades, where he might have a chance of falling in the foremost rank of the brave combatants, and thrice did the guards of the assembly gather round him and draw him back by force." At the general elections for the Legislative Assembly, so rapidly had the current changed, Lamartine was not returned; and if afterwards he found admission to the Chamber, it was owing to a partial election for the department of the Loiret. His preponderance was gone for ever, even in his own native department. At one time monarchists and republicans had united to sustain him—a shifting body which was broken by events. During the election to the presidency of the republic, there was some slight agitation in favour of him; but his name stood ultimately fifth on a list of six candidates. He received but a handful of votes—not half the number given to the candidate of the pure socialists. What remaining hopes he may have cherished were utterly extinguished by the *coup d'état* of Napoleon.

From the retirement into which he then subsided, Lamartine never emerged. His latter years were occupied in varied literary labours, by which he sought to retrieve his ruined fortunes. The "Memoirs of the Constituent Assembly" now appeared; and amongst other works, his "History of the Revolution of 1848," a stirring story, but marred by that excess of vanity and egotism which was the great weakness of his character. The pecuniary embarrassments that oppressed him were matters of public notoriety, and were made the ground of appeal to secure subscribers to his books. The offers of imperial assistance were long proudly refused; and the only recognition of his services which the poet received, was an annuity granted two years ago by the Legislative Chamber. The productions of this latter period did not add to his reputation, and despite the sympathy felt for his genius, that journal did not speak untruly which, in announcing his death, said that he "had ceased to survive himself."

A public funeral was decreed by the Emperor to Lamartine, "in recognition of the great services he

rendered to the country in time of difficulty;" but it was not accepted, out of respect to the poet's own expressed wishes for a simple burial in the tomb of his fathers. It has since been proposed to raise by public subscription a statue to his memory on the scene of his triumphs, opposite the Hotel de Ville.

## GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

### THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION AND THE EXAMINATIONS.

"In the good old times" of official history, there was no such thing as an examination before candidates for clerkships were admitted into the Government offices. There was nothing so impertinent in existence as a power authorised to inquire if young gentlemen could spell, or could write a decent letter, or could cast a sum. Ministers who possessed the patronage of the several offices were supposed to select persons qualified to serve, and the fact of the nomination was taken to be guarantee enough for the qualifications of the candidate. But it was notorious that in many instances the selection was eminently unsuitable. Ministers gave appointments, not to those best qualified to serve the public, but to those for whom friends made interest; to the dependants on political supporters; to their own kinsfolk and acquaintance; to persons, it might be, very suitable for the service; but it might be also to those who were no way fitted for it. As a matter of fact, a large number of men were admitted, who came in simply for the sake of securing an income, and without any idea of a duty correlative to it, to be performed by them. They wasted their time, and the time of those who, but for them, would have worked; they were a dead weight, dragging upon any spirit of improvement; they were conscious that any change must bring them into an unbearable light, and involve their overthrow, and they resisted change accordingly; they effectually crushed, as far as they could, any attempt at reform, and for years and years they were masters of the situation. Ignorance, prejudice, and selfishness, were duly represented by them; frivolity and vice were also not without their witnesses; and under the system which allowed of such guardians of the public interests, grew and flourished that organisation of corruption, some of the roots of which have only lately been dragged up.

In some of the public offices there had been for a few years before 1855, a sort of make-believe examination of nominees to clerkships, just enough to enable men who saw real examination looming in the future to say, "You need not apply your scheme to our office, for we already examine our clerks before admitting them." The examination, which was conducted by the chief clerk of the office, went rather to ascertain the nature and extent of the interest by which the young man had been appointed, than to satisfy the chief clerk, still less the public, as to his efficiency. It was a purely nominal affair. In 1855 the Civil Service Commissioners were appointed, and were charged with the duty of seeing that all persons nominated to serve the Crown in a civil capacity were educated up to a certain standard, which was taken to be the standard of fitness. This standard was a variable one, some departments requiring from their servants accomplishments which others agreed to dispense with; but, taken as a whole, the standard



was not high—was no more than a fairly educated lad might be expected to attain. It was the business of the Civil Service Commissioners to arrange with the heads of the several departments what their respective standards should be, and thereafter to see that the candidates for admission to the service came up to them. At the outset they had to encounter many difficulties, proceeding from both active and passive resistance on the part of the old school of officials—who does not remember the memorable correspondence in which a cabinet minister repudiated the notion that correct spelling was an essential for a good clerk? But they went to work with a will, and in a few months reduced their business within the limits of organisation. The annual reports of the Commission presented to Parliament are eminently instructive and suggestive, giving statistics not only as to the results of working upon what is often exceedingly raw material, but showing, among other things, the classes from which candidates come, the ages, and the personal and educational qualifications of the candidates themselves. It is not easy to see why there should be so variable a standard, why the tests prescribed by the War Office should not do for the Admiralty; why, in point of fact, the offices should not be classified, and one standard of qualifications be applied to each group.

Under existing arrangements, a person who has secured a nomination by a minister—for the service is not as yet thrown open, save in the Commissioners' own office, where the plan is found to answer admirably—receives, with his nomination, notice to attend on a given day at the Commissioners' office in Cannon Row. There he is required to produce a registration or baptismal certificate, or some other proof of his age, and to furnish particulars as to his parentage and education. He has also to produce certificates as to character, and to propose references of whom inquiry can be made concerning him. A medical certificate must show that he is not physically incapacitated from thoroughly doing his work. These particulars being ascertained to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, the candidate is told to attend at the office again on a certain date for the purpose of undergoing the prescribed examination. On the day named, the postulant for civil service finds himself *cum multis aliis* in the apartment which is to him a "chamber of horrors," or "a place to spend a happy day," according as his temperament is nervous or confident, and his trust in his own power to endure mental vivisection is large or contracted. Cold and passionless seem the inquisitors who are to operate upon him, and who are discovered in possession of the torture chamber when the candidates present themselves. A commissioner may also be seen seated at the end of the table, engaged upon anything but the work of examination, an almost careless spectator of the scene, save in the event of disturbance, or of anything requiring the intervention of high authority. He is there to see fair play. Play, indeed! Young Civilis does not think it play, as he takes his seat at the long board of green baize, and sees before him, and on either side of him, a fearful array of paper, pens, and ink, placed at regular intervals upon the table, like the trees by a Dutch canal, and which are to be the means of conveying to the minds of the examiners an idea of how much or how little he and his congeners have availed themselves of educational advantages. Oh for one hour only out of the many hours wasted in school

days, to enable him to look over his algebra! Oh for a few minutes, just *five* minutes, to allow of his making sure whether it was Alexander the Great or Julius Cæsar who discovered America, and whether the Euphrates does or does not empty itself into the sea by means of the Bristol Channel!

Not one minute, my young friend, can be given. "Big Ben" has proclaimed in dreadful tones that the hour, if not the man, has come. Many have been your leisure hours, many more may they be, but this is not one of them. Begin. Already your neighbours to left and right have dotted a sheet of foolscap with answers that will win marks, and you—you do not know *what* you can do till you try—must make up for leeway. It may be that, excited by the exhibition of activity around you, your mind may evolve from its recesses some solution of the difficulties which have so disturbed your equanimity at the very outset. The past is irrevocable, regrets are vain, "act in the living present" if you would win the prize. Alas! poor Civilis cannot act in the living present, which indeed only helps him to a view of the dead future, so far as the civil service is concerned. The hours lost have been too many, the opportunities wasted too abundant; he cannot on the sudden, and simply because he needs the knowledge, supply it; he is outrun in the race, and must yield to better economisers of time and opportunities. By the time "Big Ben" has struck again Civilis has risen from the table, and seeing the hand of fate in the river Euphrates, of whose whereabouts he is so uncertain, and in the conflicting claims of Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar to be counted as the discoverers of America, quits the room and takes advantage of being out of it to escape from the building. The Civil Service Commissioners see him no more; he is the minus sign to his competitors in the race for the appointment, and he carries his talents and his energies "to fresh fields and pastures new." Of the competitors he leaves behind him only one receives the prize on this occasion; but if the unsuccessful candidates have come pretty well up in the race, and given evidence of ability, as "good seconds" or "good thirds," they will have another chance on a future occasion. It is usual to nominate several persons to compete for the same appointment; formerly it was the practice to require candidates to come up to a fixed standard only. The report of the examiners is made as soon as possible to the Commissioners, who refer the verdict to the minister controlling the office to which the postulant for civil service has been nominated. The actual appointment is notified to the candidate by the minister who has nominated him.

The machinery by which these examinations are conducted consists of three commissioners, the first receiving £1,500 a year, the other two being unpaid; a secretary with £800 a year; a registrar with £700; three senior clerks with salaries ranging from £300 to £500; four junior clerks at £100 to £250; and four supplementary clerks at £80 to £200. The inquisitors are two in number, the first getting £700, the second £600.

In the annual report of the Commissioners is much interesting matter, not only relating to the business of the past year, but to the business of the service in general. Bound up with it are often to be found specimens of the examination papers set at past trials. To the inquiring student who will work out these papers, taking pains to do so according to the

utmost of his ability, and getting some able friend to criticise and correct his answers, these specimens are of great value and assistance, for though the very identical papers may not be set again, and it is most likely they will not, yet they enable the student to form a very good idea of the nature of the examination which will be held for a particular office. In the report also will be found lists showing the qualifications prescribed for each office and department, together with the limits of age for admission. It remains only to add that as a rule the minister presiding over the department to which admission is sought is the sole nominator of candidates, and that to him, therefore, application must be made for all official favours. Once in the service, however, patronage no longer avails. At one time, no doubt, the practice obtained of advancing a man simply because he was related to Lord This, or was the connection of a political supporter of Mr. That; and to this period succeeded another in which promotion went by longevity, while "patient merit" of the unworthy took far more than was good either for it or the public service. Persistent indifference to zealous efforts made at last indifferentists of the zealous, and men who would have given their abilities, their strength, and their time, to appreciated service, withdrew them, and, discharging their work in a perfunctory manner, did no more than they were obliged, and carried their talents to a better market outside. Now, however, a different system obtains. A civil servant in any of the departments who would get on must work, and that thoroughly; and if he be unable or unwilling to do so he will remain in an inferior grade, however grand his connections, or however strong his "interest." On the other hand, if he will work loyally and intelligently, not seeking his own advantage apart from that of the public, he will be noticed, and his working will be recognised in the shape of promotion. One thing only remains, viz., to throw open the civil service to public competition, and there will be in the prospects held out by that service an inducement and a stimulus to exertion in all the schools of the kingdom, such as has never yet been offered to the youth of the country.

## VANISHED AND VANISHING INDUSTRIES.

PONDERING the other day over the adventures of the immortal John Gilpin, it struck us incidentally that that accommodating and logical friend of his, the Calender, or Calenderer, must have followed an occupation which, though it is still a branch of industry, is now considered merely as part of a manufacturing process, and has fallen from the dignity of an independent trade. In the times when Cowper wrote, calendering, which is the art of imparting a polished surface to woven fabrics, was performed by hand, and was done by rubbing the surface of the stuff with some polishing instrument. People of humble means generally did their calendering at home, and we have a distinct recollection of the methods in use about the first decade of the present century, when the instrument used was a pebble perfectly smooth, and as large as the hand could well grasp; with such a polisher, the newly-washed curtains and table-covers were rubbed on a hard slab until the required stiffness and shining outside were produced. Genteel people put their calendering out, sending it to the calenderer's, where it was done in a more finished

manner by a somewhat similar process, by hands who made light work of it, and worked for small wage. As machinery gained ground, it was found that the work could be done at once more effectually and with far greater rapidity by machine-moved mangles, and the pressure of metal cylinders; the machinery did the work cheaper, and in course of time the calenderer by hand found it a hopeless task to compete with the cylinders and the steam-engine, and eventually he gave up the contest. He made a fight, however, for his failing trade, and his sign-board did not finally vanish from the streets, if we remember rightly, until between twenty and thirty years ago. Thus the calenderer's trade has ceased, or rather has slipped out of his grasp into that of the machinist.

Now what has happened to the Calenderer has happened to a crowd of other industrials, who in the course of the last fifty years or so have seen their proper crafts swallowed up by wholesale processes, superseded by new inventions, or extinguished by changes in fashion and social habits. It will not be uninteresting to take a brief glance at some of these departing or departed occupations, and to revive some of the associations connected with them. Suppose we begin with pins. Pins are now more abundant than ever they were, and the consumption of them will continue to increase with the increase of population; but the pin-maker as he existed in the days of yore, and as he still exists in the popular mind, is a mere delusive phantom. He exists now not as a worker, but as an idea, and performs his part, not in cutting, grinding, heading, or polishing pins, but in illustrating the wonderful advantages arising from the division of labour; the fact that it used to take a dozen or more men to make a pin, and that such joint industry was most profitable, is too good a thing to be discarded by rhetorical people, though it has long ceased to be true. So the pin-grinders, headers, etc., still figure in lectures and essays, though they have been long quiet in their graves, and the pins are made by neat little machines at the rate of two hundred and fifty a minute—of which machines a single child tends half-a-dozen. The writers who dote on this apt illustration forget that they have not seen a pin made by such joint labour for some twenty years past.

Nail-making at the forge, though not a vanished, is a fast vanishing trade. Time was when every nail used had to be forged on the anvil; at the present time hardly one nail in five hundred is so forged. Whole houses, nay, whole streets, may be built, are built, without the use of a single forged nail. Instead of being forged, these indispensable implements are cut by powerful machinery from cold plates of rolled iron. The rate of cutting depends upon the size and form of the nail, but is rarely so slow as a nail per second, a hundred a minute being nearer the average, while the small headless nails, or sparables, used by shoemakers, are thrown off by the machine at the rate of a thousand or more a minute. The nailer who works at the forge has evidently but a bad chance in competing with such antagonists, and he would have no chance at all, were it not that nails forged in the fire are of a far superior quality to those cut from the cold metal, being about ten times as tough. As it is, the poor nailer follows an all but hopeless vocation, and is condemned to live at continual hand-grips with poverty and privation.

Among occupations which are clean gone never

to return is that of flint-cutting for purposes of producing fire. No more flints for firearms, or for tinder-boxes—and no more making of tinder-boxes and tinder, the very mention of which brings back that ancient and domestic odour which used to penetrate and pervade the house on occasions after supper, when Betty was burning tinder in the regions below—and brings back, too, that other unfragrant odour of the brimstone match, redolent at times in the darkness of a winter's morning, and following the persistent "crack, crack" of the flint against the steel, which accompanied the difficult feat of striking a light. Connected with the tinder-box, too, is the vision of that "poor old man" of sorrowful memory, "whose trembling limbs have borne him to your door," two or three times a week, with brimstone matches for sale at six bunches a penny. The old matchmaker, formerly the most picturesque and most familiar of the street vagrants, has vanished as completely from the land as have the ancient Druids.

Contemporary with him was the cottage lace-maker, who wove at her own door—

"Pillow and bobbins all her little store."

She, it is true, has not vanished altogether, like the poor old matchman, but, we were going to say, it might be better if she had, seeing that the lace-making machines of Nottingham and Tiverton have surpassed the delicate cunning of her hand, and have brought down the price of her products so low that she can no longer hope by—

"Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,  
To earn a scanty pittance, and at night  
Lie down content."

The pittance she now earns by shuffling her threads is so scanty, that it would not pay for a place to lie down in, and she no longer looks to live by lace-making, but rather busies herself with her bobbins just to fill up the odd hours, which would be unemployed in the intervals of more remunerative labour.

Straw bonnet-making may be assumed just now to have come within our category. In our young days "when George the Third was king," straw bonnets were an institution looked upon as national. The straws were split and the substance platted in every middle-class house where there were rising families, and straw plating formed the staple of domestic leisure-work, much as netting and crochet do now. A hundred times have our boyish fingers been impressed for straw-splitting, while the lasses were plating round the winter fire. Then bonnets were bonnets, covering the head with a margin of a foot or two to spare, and presenting a sort of conically shell-shaped recess in which the fair face nestled in comfort. It is true that all sorts of changes were rung upon the fashions as years rolled on, and "straws" at one time amplified almost to the size of a coach wheel, and at another shrunk to the dimensions of a coal-scuttle, which useful article, to say the truth, they much resembled in form. But they were real, substantial bonnets all along, and afforded employment for the straw-platters of Dunstable and elsewhere, until the present fashion crept in, displacing the bonnets by "oyster shells," and converting the head of "lovely woman" into the semblance, all too brazen, of a battering-ram. Under this ugly and undecent dispensation, the straw-plating trade is vanishing by degrees, and will speedily disappear

altogether unless the whirligig of fashion should glide again into the forsaken track.

Crinoline-making is a trade which has had its rise, has grown up to tremendous proportions, and has fallen away almost to nothing, within the memory and under the observation of us all. A few years ago, ten thousand tons of steel ribbons for crinoline were annually manufactured at Sheffield alone. The manufacture dwindled as the ladies thought fit to reduce their amplitude, and must have fallen into comparative insignificance by this time.

In days not long past, both ladies' and gentlemen's hats were made on a basis of felt, and a gentleman's hat was often called a felt. In Smith's "Horace in London," a gent who recovers his lost hat is described as having "regained his felt and felt what he regained." But very few hats are felted now, and the process of felting, as applied to other materials, has been largely superseded, for felting is but slow work and hardly adapted to meet the modern demand for cheap goods.

Among the household changes which point to the decease or decay of certain industrial pursuits, may be mentioned the introduction of the sewing-machine, which in a single day will do as much work as a brace of busy sempstresses would get through in a week. Again, the knitting-needles, which in our young days were everlastingly busy, are now becoming rarities except in the houses of the poor, where the knitting of stockings is still carried on by the old or the crippled and blind incapable of other labour. Among the kitchen gear we no longer see the horn lanterns which used to light us about the garden or the streets after dark in the days when there was no gas, or if we do see them it is as relics of old, not specimens of recent manufacture. The making of that clear, transparent horn must have become almost a lost art. And what of the links a yard long which used to hang in the scullery, to be lighted on pitch-dark nights and foggy days? They are gone, though in some places the huge iron extinguishers are left behind, and still figure on the quaint porticoes of old-fashioned houses. Then one hears no longer the clatter of pattens about the house basement and the courtyard on rainy days, nor wonders at Molly's lofty stature as she stalks about amidst the sloppy torrent. Is patten-making, too, becoming extinct? At our meals we seldom now set eyes on a plated article of the old type. Clever as was the process of spreading a plate of pure silver upon one of copper, and working both up together into the form of any article required, it has had to give way before the process of electro-plating, which produces the same result so much more readily and cheaply, and which deposits the silver upon the baser metal by a method which renders its attachment so much more durable.

Of the fine arts there is one which seems to be surely dying out, and the decline and loss of which we can but deeply regret. We speak of the exquisite art of miniature painting, which received a mortal blow by the discovery of photography, and has been dying by inches ever since. There is no hope that this art will ever revive or be again what it once was, and therefore we would advise those in the possession of good miniatures to make the most of them and preserve them with care, for the day will surely come when those of first-rate merit will be prized as gems and diligently sought after. Such men as Robertson, Thorburn, Chalons, Ross, and not a few others who might be mentioned, will have no



successors—it is impossible in the nature of things that they should have; a man must possess real genius and devote his life to the work, to be able to do what these men did, and it is not to be expected that such men will enter the lists against a chemico-mechanical process which, after a sort, accomplishes in a few seconds what would cost them weeks or months of careful and delicate labour.

On looking abroad in the streets we might fancy at first that time and change had played havoc among the peripatetic industries, and that most of them had vanished. But it is not so. If some have disappeared, the mass of them yet remain, though they are not so demonstrative as they once were, for the simple reason that many of the old London cries have been silenced by the municipal authorities. Thus the sweep is obliged to mitigate his matutinal bawling; the newsman who, in the days when news was a novelty, was in the habit of rushing along the highways, now blowing a blast on his horn, and now startling the street with the cry of "Great news! News! Great news!" has been bereft of his horn and doomed to silence, and in revenge has pretty generally relinquished the profession in favour of some small boy who throws the paper down your area, or pokes it with a joke at your bare-elbowed Abigail, as she sweeps the door-front. The law which silenced the street cries excepted from its operation the hawkers of goods readily perishable. Thus the tinkle of the muffin-bell, the explosive shout of the travelling fishmonger, and the long drawl of the strawberry girl were never put down, but are heard to this day, even on Sundays. We may add, moreover, that the law is not very stringently enforced so long as the criers of any kind of wares conform to the policeman's views of propriety and keep moving on. Of the street traders who have really disappeared, the one we miss most is the wandering pieman, immortalised by Hogarth in his "March to Finchley," and dear to the memories of many a sexagenarian who in times long past delighted in his sweet and savoury wares. Not that the pieman has vanished, by any means; he has but quitted the streets, and, assuming the dignity of the tax-paying tradesman, established himself in a shop. The penny pie is still an institution, and if we may judge by the quantities eaten under cover instead of *al fresco*, or sold over the counter to be consumed at home, is a more favourite refection than ever it was.

We have a pleasant recollection of a trade which in the time of our boyhood flourished along the far-stretching coasts of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and parts of the north of England. Then, when night came down, the line of the shore would be marked out by a hundred blazing fires attended by swarthy-looking figures moving about them. These were the kelp-burners, who got their living by burning the sea-weed, which was cast ashore in exhaustless abundance, and from whose ashes were manufactured the potash and soda of commerce. That exciting and picturesque calling has vanished for ever, being extinguished by the advance of chemical science. Soda is now made from common salt at a much more economical rate, and the old kelp-burners are no more seen in the land.

If space allowed us, we might dissertate more at large on this tempting subject. In agriculture alone there is room for a long chapter, seeing that the labour of the sower, the reaper, the mower, the thresher, the drainer, are all verging towards the vanishing point,

at the instigation of new machinery and cunning inventions. Again—every cotton and woollen factory would supply a multitude of instances, in which what was the labour of human hands is now monopolised by sinews of iron and steel; and every large establishment where industrial crafts are carried on would furnish similar testimony. Myriads of clocks are almost entirely made by machinery, and even of the machines themselves it may be said, that the labour bestowed on their construction is not, as it used to be, the labour of human hands so much as of other machines.

The subject on which we have thus briefly glanced is one of considerable importance and suggestiveness. It is not clear at present in what direction our industrial changes are tending; though to our view they seem to point, it may be but vaguely as yet, to a time when industry of all kinds will be more systematised than it is now or ever has been; and when, of course, it will be carried on to the better satisfaction of all persons engaged in it. But we must leave the reader to make his own reflections.

## Original Fables.

BY MRS. PROSSER.

### COMMON TALK.

"NED, have you heard the news?" gabbled the geese, as Ned and his mother met them down by the pool.

Ned had not time to inquire "What news?" when they gabbled again. "The Squire has bought you for Master John to ride, and you are to be shod, and wear a beautiful saddle and bridle, and be kept on oats and beans, and live in a warm stable, and be trained to hunt!"

Ned was overwhelmed with surprise; but his mother said calmly, "Ladies, may I ask who told you so?"

"Oh, it's the talk of the common," they replied. "The old pack horse, and the dun cow, and the black mare and her colt, that came here for a few days' run yesterday, and the miller's dog, and Drover, and—in short, everybody says so."

"Mother, is it true?" said Ned, wistfully, when the geese had left them, and were swimming in the pool.

"I did overhear the miller's dog tell Drover that he fancied his master meant to buy the young colt and train him for mill work, and that, I have no doubt, is all that is true about it," his mother answered.

"Oh, mother!" cried Ned, disappointed. "But how could they make up such stories?"

"I don't know how, my son," she said, "but I know this, that, in general, 'the talk of the common,' or 'Common Talk,' whoever invents it, is only fit to be gabbled by geese, and told to donkeys, and is in some cases so ridiculous that only a very young donkey will believe it."

### THE TWO JUDGES.

"WHAT a keen and just judgment the Wind has!" said a sheaf of Wheat to his brother, as they stood waiting to be threshed. "See how he finds out the chaff! not a particle escapes him!"

"I see, he is keen and perfectly just, I own," answered the other; "but how much happier the Sieve must be, that does the same work quite as well, with this difference—he holds the corn and lets the chaff go!"

### PROSPERITY MAKES PRAISE.

"HA, ha!" laughed the honey-combed old Mud Wall.

"What pleases you so?" asked the Bees that went in and out of it.

"Why, didn't you see the lady stop and admire me, and say I was like burnished gold?" said the old Wall. "I hope you

will learn to respect me in future, and make your nests elsewhere."

"You silly fellow!" said the Bees. "If the lady were to see you on a dull day, or after sunset, when the glorious beams no longer glowed on you, she would not call you burnished gold, but a crumbling old ruin. Sunshine can make great things out of nothing!"

#### DANGEROUS TO GO ON THE ENEMY'S GROUND.

"An easy conquest!" said the Eagle, attracted by the glittering scales of a large fish, which shone through the clear deep waters of the lake. "An easy conquest!" And as he dashed into the water, it was as if lightning had smitten the cliff and a fragment of it had fallen into the lake.

There is a struggle—the prey in its anguish dives down, and draws the enemy with it.

"Ah!" exclaims the drowning king of birds, "had I been in the air, who would have dared to measure strength with me? But in this strange and treacherous element I am overcome by one whom elsewhere I should have despised."

#### WHO DOES THE WORK?

"You observe," said the Lightning, "I make the glory of the storm. I come first. The oak quivers, the old thatch blazes, the creatures run to the covert, and men hide their eyes, for who can endure my brightness?"

"Oh yes," growled the Thunder, "you go first in your pride, but let me tell you it is my terror that fills the heart with trembling, my bolt that lays low the forest tree and consumes the thatch!"

"All I know is, you would both make a pretty piece of work of it without me," said the Rain. "I have no glory of shine nor terror about me, but I come between you and mischief; and although you do good in clearing the air, ask the Earth if I am not the best part of the thunderstorm!"

#### HOW NED SHOWED HIMSELF A DONKEY.

"BRAY, Ned," said the Colts that were feeding in the same field, where the pasture was short.

Ned looked pleased, pricked up his ears, and brayed tremendously.

"Bray again, Ned," said the Colts, with mischievous glee.

Ned made a succession of brays till he was fairly tired.

"You like my braying?" he said cooly.

"Vastly," said the Colts, who saw the master coming to turn him out.

"Oh dear!" said Ned, "why did I bray? If I had kept quiet I could never have known I was here."

"Because you were a donkey, to be sure," said the Colts, "otherwise you would have known that nobody would bear your braying without a good reason for it. We knew it was the only way to get rid of you."

#### THE POWER OF NOVELTY.

"PLENTY of telescopes out; they are staring at us well to-night," said the Stars one to another.

"Staring at you!" said the Moon. "Not so, believe me."

"Then at you, you think?" said the Stars.

"No; nor at me," said the Moon.

"Why, what are they staring at, then?" said the Stars.

"Don't you see that streak of pale light yonder?" said the Moon.

"What, that miserable little comet?" asked the Stars.

"Yes; that is what the telescopes are pointed at, and you and I may go to another universe for any attention we shall get while that comet is there."

"How contemptible! how monstrous! to prefer that poor pale thing to us!" exclaimed the Stars.

"Something new, friends—something new—that's the secret. They can get us at any time, but a comet is a novelty, and, however inferior, better worth looking at, in their estimation."

#### THAT'S THE WAY IT SPREADS!

SPLASH went a little stone into a pool, and a bubble and a circle showed where it fell.

Then came a circle beyond, fainter but larger. Another came round that, and another, and another, each fainter and larger, till the last reached the margin of the pool and moved the rushes.

"Something very important must have happened," said the Rushes, "from the size of this circle!"

"No, gentlemen," said a Withy that towered above them.

"I can see over the pool, and I assure you the first circle from which this, through a succession of others, took its rise, was very small, and had a most insignificant origin; but I have often noticed of little things and their report, that the longer they live the larger they grow, till the effect at last bears no proportion to its cause."

#### NO ROOM FOR BOASTING.

"Isn't it disgraceful of those fields yonder—as brown as a berry; and here we are, green and gay and fresh, quite a delight to look at!" said the Rushes on the brook margin.

"Just listen to them!" said the withered Fields. "How easy it is for them to find fault and take credit for their greenness. Only let them be here and us there, and we should soon see what makes the difference between us!"

#### "THE BIRD THAT BUILDS THE LOWEST SOARS THE HIGHEST."

"Do you hear that conceited fellow showing on up in the sky?" said the Raven, as the Lark's joyous trill filled the air with music. "Anybody would take him to be of some consequence. Who would believe that his shabby little home lies close on the ground, and that, except when he is above the clouds, he is running about unnoticed in the fallows hunting for food for his family?"

"Don't forget, brother," replied a wise old Crow, "the lesson the Lark teaches—it is a very good one: the lowest builder makes the highest flyer and the sweetest singer!"

#### A BALANCE OF ADVANTAGES.

"Ah!" said the Birds and the Fish to the Flying Fish, "if we were like you, could fly and swim too, how happy, how safe we should be! Yours are double privileges of enjoyment and security."

"They are," said the Flying Fish, "but envy me not; for these double privileges bring double dangers and double wants. I can't, like you, remain content either in air or water, but must often be changing from one to the other. Thus I expose myself to the perils of both, and have double risks and double wants."

#### CREDIT IS IN USING OPPORTUNITIES; NOT IN HAVING THEM.

"Don't be impertinent!" said a Toad to a Grasshopper that hopped unceremoniously over his back. "Reverence your betters."

"Impertinent?" said the Grasshopper, amazed.

"Yes—impertinent! Do you know I am fifty years old?" said the Toad.

"Fifty years!" exclaimed the Grasshopper.

"Yes. I was shut up in yonder great stone for fifty years," said the Toad, pompously.

"And what did you do all the time, sir?" asked the Grasshopper.

"Do? nothing," replied the Toad.

"A fig for you, then!" chirped the Grasshopper. "If you had been at work all the time I would have humbly begged your pardon, and treated you as my better. But since you might as well have been out of the world as in it for any use you were of, I can't think of it; for I consider we Grasshoppers who have been born only a week, and have chirped and hopped with all our might ever since, are much more respectable."